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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 6387th meeting of the Security Council, held on 17 September 2010, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council reiterates its strong condemnation of mass rapes which occurred in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo late July and August, reaffirming its resolutions 1820 (2008),1882 (2009),1888 (2009), 1894 (2009) and 1925 (2010) and recalling its statements to the press on August 26, September 8 and 9, the Security Council urges the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure a swift and fair prosecution of the perpetrators of these terrible crimes and to inform the Security Council on measures undertaken to this end. The Security Council expresses its readiness to consider all appropriate actions, including targeted measures against the perpetrators.

"The Security Council stresses the primary responsibility of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for ensuring security in its territory and protecting its civilians with respect for the rule of law, human rights and international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council calls upon the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to condemn these atrocities and to provide effective assistance to the victims of sexual abuse and to support efforts undertaken by all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, to protect and assist the victims and to prevent further violence.

"The Security Council reiterates its urgent call to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in cooperation with the United Nations and other relevant actors, to put an end to impunity, in particular those bearing responsibility for gross human rights violations must be held to account. The Security Council is determined to support the Congolese authorities in addressing the root causes of the above incidents.

"The Security Council stresses that the fight against impunity is an integral part of the urgently-needed reform of the security sector. It encourages the Congolese authorities to pursue their efforts, with the support of relevant multilateral and bilateral donors and MONUSCO within its current mandate, to strengthen its military capacity, to reinforce the training and equipment of the

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Congolese National Police and to enhance the capacities of the justice and corrections systems.

"The Security Council takes note with interest of the recommendations made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to enhance efforts to protect and defend civilians and improve MONUSCO's impact in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

"The Security Council underlines the need for MONUSCO to improve relations with communities, including through better information-gathering mechanisms and communication tools. In that regard, the Security Council urges MONUSCO to pursue efforts to enhance its regular interaction with the civilian population to strengthen confidence and raise awareness and understanding about its mandate and activities. It draws attention to the importance of increased community liaison, increased patrolling and appropriate communication equipment in needed areas.

"The Security Council supports the launch by MONUSCO and the United Nations Country Team of a sensitization campaign, including through Radio Okapi, to encourage victims of sexual violence to report and to seek treatment and legal assistance.

"The Security Council reaffirms its resolve to eliminate all forms of violence against women and children during and after armed conflict. It supports the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and encourages her to regularly interact with MONUSCO's Sexual Violence Unit to coordinate United Nations response and monitor the implementation of the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy to Combat Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Security Council looks forward to her trip to the country later this month and requests a briefing upon her return.

"The Security Council requests a briefing by the Secretary-General on MONUSCO's strategy for the protection of civilians and the overall challenges the Mission faces in implementing this strategy. The Security Council continues to support a comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians and to ensure peace and security in the region, in particular efforts to accelerate effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of Congolese armed groups and disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR) of foreign armed groups, to fight against the illegal exploitation of natural resources and to establish effective state authority and strengthen the rule of law in conflict affected areas."